

LONESTAR NEWS

SPECIAL TROOPS BATTALION, 2BDE

FOB KALSU, IRAQ



April 1, 2006



Words from Lone Star 6

Saba el Khayr, (Good Morning),

As we enter our fifth, or sixth (depending on when you start counting), month of deployment I must inform all of our family and friends that we miss you dearly. Your cards, care packages, emails and occasional telephone calls are keeping us motivated. Thank you for doing the hard job while we are deployed.

The Lone Star Battalion continues to impress the Brigade that we support as well as the Iraqi people with our professionalism and caring. We are doing extremely well and continue to make progress each and every day.

The Soldiers of Bulldog remain the unsung heroes and heroines in the battalion. They don't get a lot of good press which in their business means that they are doing a stellar job. We continue to communicate across distances unknown to previous units thanks to these great Soldiers. They have recently supported several operations for other battalions with their RETRANS teams and have linked in several Corps elements so that they can communicate using our equipment. I guess that their reputation for providing support is growing faster and farther than we expected.

Bulldog's efforts allowed the Brigade to conduct a video teleconference with the Brigade's Rear Detachment and Family Readiness Group. The battalion is going to follow suit and has planned our own VTC for 11 APR with the FRG and Rear Detachment.

Stalker said farewell to CPT Carl Carter who has passed the baton to CPT Wayne Prince. Carl is taking a well-deserved break for Environmental and Morale Leave and will, upon his return, move up to the Division G2 section where he will push all of the intelligence that he can down to the Warhorse Brigade and the Stalkers. Wayne Prince, formerly the 2-8 Infantry S2 has simply moved his sleeping quarters from one side of FOB Kalsu to the other. He is a very experienced leader and the Company has not missed a beat during the transition. We wish CPT Carter well in his future endeavors and hope that he stays in touch.

The Stalkers continue to collect and process intelligence that is critical to Brigade operations. Their hard work and technical excellence have led to the capture of several insurgents, making our area of operations a safer place for us and the Iraqis.

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The MPs get ready to take COL Tully on the road

Promotions

SSG Barnard	SGT Brown, C
SSG Killion	SGT Henderson, B
SSG Morris	SGT McWhorter
SSG Wehry	SGT Pierce
SPC Schoonover	SGT Pua
SPC Sutter	PFC Strayhorn



PFC Stopp stands watch as marchers make their way to Karbala

April 2006

The TUAV platoon is getting a new airstrip paved for them. In the meantime, they had another temporary strip dozed and rolled for them. Their experience is growing more evident that despite moving to an alternate and less than perfect strip that they flew successfully with no incidents. The tactical human intelligence teams continue to conduct patrols and meetings with the maneuver battalions, helping to provide their piece of that critical intelligence that is helping keep us safe.

Hurricane continues its diverse and multi-faceted missions. Without their strong efforts the rest of the Battalion, as well as the Brigade Headquarters, would not be able to perform its missions. (Some might say that keeping the Brigade and Battalion Headquarters in the dark would be an improvement but that would be mean.) The S6/commo section, under the leadership of SGT Mish, keep us connected at the user level, even the Battalion XO who has trouble turning on his computer without assistance.

The motorpool, at only half strength because they've given up people to protect our perimeter and work in the detainee holding area, have kept our vehicles rolling, our generators producing power and our air conditioners pumping out cool air. There are many other soldiers who, although not working in their MOS, are key ingredients to both our success and our comfortable living conditions. The Soldiers running the internet café and the FOB PX, the Soldiers on guard duty and our cooks working in the dining facility are all important and are all doing yeomen's work.

The other mission we undertook in which all companies helped was escorting contractor trucks from Baghdad down to FOB Kalsu. Kalsu will grow tremendously in the near future and every thing from portable toilets to wood must be shipped down from the Baghdad. We have a few road warriors who make the round trip daily. These missions are very tiring because there is always the threat of IEDs along the routes. Often these patrols are delayed in order to clear the roads of IEDs.

During the month of March, the battalion helped secure the safe passage of over 4 million visitors to the holy city of Karbala, which is in the Brigade's area of responsibility. Arba'een in Arabic recognizes the 40th day after the death of Imam Ali. Loyal Shia Iraqis walk over an 8-10 day period, some coming as far as 200 miles to remember the death and use this painful experience as a form of prayer. At the Iraqi Compound the MiTT team spent close to 10 days living with our counterparts 24 hours a day. We saw over 70,000 visitors a day pass by the FOB. The amazing thing was no one carried anything. Supporters had set up tents along the routes providing food, water and even a place to sleep at night. The walkers totally rely on the generosity of fellow Shias.

These followers didn't have any high speed foot gear, most were wearing flip flops. You could easily distinguish who had walked a long distance as these were the ones limping and clearly in pain. Some has blisters that would make a grown man cry. The only treatment was someone pouring water and providing a bandage for open wounds. It was truly amazing to see sacrifice of the Iraqi people. It was a great social event as well, with some communities walking in big groups, carrying flags, and singing.

We even saw a caravan complete with camels, donkeys and horses. Some of the Iraqis who don't care for our presence chanted as they saw us. We kindly waved and smiled. Several of the Iraqi Soldiers we work with walked on their days off and some of their neighborhoods sponsored tents. During Saddam's regime, this walk was illegal and many would risk prison or beatings to make the walk through the country side. Our liberation has allowed them to practice this most intense event free from any threat of the government. A site that neither I or our Soldiers will ever forget.

If you have not yet heard, the Brigade is going to case its colors sometime next summer and move to Ft Carson. After the initial scare of the news we have settled down and are attempting to understand exactly what this means to all of us. Some people will remain at Ft Hood in order to join another unit. Others will move to Ft Carson and stay with the 4th Infantry Division while others will go to school or PCS to another unit. The Division continues to engage the Department of the Army to ensure that our Soldiers are taken care of and, as much as possible, get to where they want to go. Please be patient as we work through this situation from a long way away.

I want everyone to return home safely - just as much as you want them to - so I can assure everyone that we are doing our best to take care of your loved ones. I want everyone to come home as much as you do. Leaders at all levels are combating complacency, especially at this critical time of the deployment where things sometimes get boring or repetitive. The buddy-system is helping us keep each other safe from dehydration and complacency while our training and equipment are keeping everyone safe from the insurgents.

We miss you and thank you again for all that you are doing while we are away.

Lone Star 6

HHC Hurricanes

Well, we've had a full plate with all the normal missions and some additional ones that are keeping the Soldiers quite busy and on their toes. The weather is warming up, very nice days right now. We've got to enjoy it while we can! Everyday one of the Soldiers does something that reminds me what a great group of people we have here in the Hurricanes! We are involved in supporting the brigade and division at every level. Basically, without the Hurricanes, the brigade would stop functioning, a testament to the outstanding job the soldiers do here day in and day out. SGT Mish and SPC Shelton rewired and fixed all computers and telephones in the phone center. SSG Mitchell and his crew are involved in the expansion of the dining facility, SFC Nance has the PX fully stocked and keeping the Soldiers pockets empty. 1LT Gardner, SFC Stone, the MPs, and the maintenance personnel assigned to work with them are improving the Detainee Holding Area everyday, and endure almost weekly inspections of the facilities and operations, actually being identified as having the best DHA in the division after the last inspection. SGT Kerkhoff and the Brigade PSD are on missions almost every single day, ensuring the safety of the Brigade command group, and spending entirely too much time in the gym when they aren't gone! SGT Malloy, SGT Patterson, and the medics are enduring 24 hour shifts at the clinic while doing a fantastic job putting back together those Soldiers unlucky enough to be injured or sick. SFC King and the mechanics keep our rolling armor rolling, and are looking forward to the heat, when everything quits working, except them! Although I don't have room to mention everyone, each one of the Soldiers do a great job at whatever mission they are performing! The leave program is running smoothly, we've already had several Soldiers make it home and return, with more going everyday. If yours hasn't been home yet, they are on the way soon. We did find out last week the company will be getting a new Commander in the next couple of months, which means inventories and equipment layouts for everyone. Fun, fun! We promoted PFC's Pucillo, Wiegold, and Story to Specialist, well deserved by all. SSG Santosky was selected for promotion to SFC and will soon be among the senior NCO Corps. We have had several reenlistments lately, a very good opportunity for the Soldiers to collect a tax-free bonus while deployed in addition to continuing their service to the nation. We also had SGT Patterson and the ex-SGT Dennett become SGT and SGT Patterson while on leave. Congratulations to them, even though I still won't let them room together! I can't stress enough how proud I am to have the honor of leading your Soldiers in this mission, and I know everyone of them, while wishing they were home, knows they are doing an important job during our time here. For the Soldiers, thanks for your continued support and we'll call soon!



Words from the Chaplain

Hola Lone Star Family!!!

I was doing an inventory search on my files and I found this article and after I read it, it came to mind that I would like share it with my Lone Star Family.

CRUMBLED PAPER

When I was a small child, my impulsive character will make me burst in rage to any small provocation. Most of the times after those moments of rage I felt ashamed and tried my best to apologize and to comfort whomever I had offended.

One day my teacher, whom had seen me making excuses after one of those outbursts, set me aside and gave me a smooth piece of paper and said, "Crumbled it".

Full of surprise I obeyed and made a small ball out of it.

"Now try to make the paper as smooth as it was before".

Suffice to say it was impossible for me to do that. The piece of paper was all crumbled up.

"People's heart, he said, it's like this piece of paper. The impression you leave in them will be as difficult to erase as the crumbles and ridges of this paper".

In this way I learned how to have more patience and comprehension. Anytime you feel like exploding, just remember that crumbled paper.

Unknown Author

"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you." Mt 7:12 NIV

STB (Rear)

Special Troops Battalion (Rear) continues to in-process and train new arrivals to the Lonestar Battalion. This month STB has received four new Soldiers: SPC Hetzel, SPC Jerome, PFC Nguyen and PVT Graves. The STB headquarters building is now located in Building 10003 (31st and Ironside).

The Family Readiness Group (FRG) continues to work wonders in support of spouses and families of deployed Soldiers. The FRG and rear detachment is currently organizing the viewing of "A Day in the Life of a Lonestar Soldier" a video of troops in Iraq put together for families (date and time TBD).

On 23MAR06 4ID held a youth gathering for teenagers of deployed Soldiers at Bronco Youth Center. This great event will continue and soon implement additional school age year groups so be on the look out for the email.

Nominations:

Mrs Craft is nominated for volunteer of the month for March 2006. Congratulations!

Births:

PVT and Mrs Moekel: Baby Aden Louis Moekel born Mar 20
Congratulations!

LONESTAR!

CPT Audry Townsell

LONESTAR 6R

Alpha Company Stalkers

The Stalkers witnessed the end of an era and the dawning of another as we conducted a change of command. CPT Carl Carter relinquished command to CPT Wayne Prince, on 16 MAR 06 while the Stalkers continued the wartime mission without skipping a beat. I am from Ottawa, IL and have over 15 years in the Army. I come to the Stalkers from 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, also located on FOB Kalsu, and have been in 2BCT over three years including participation in OIF I, which I spent in Baqubah, Iraq. My wife, Andrea, is no stranger to the business, as both of her parents served in the military, and she has deployed to Iraq as a civilian herself during OIF I. Andrea and I are very excited to become a member of the team!

I have worked with many of your loved ones before and it is an honor to serve among them. I have seen the results of this company's effort at nearly every level; from the end user of their intelligence products who is on the ground investigating a suspected enemy location, to the brigade and battalion intelligence officers who seek to out think the enemy on the enemy's home turf. The things these Soldiers accomplish in order to provide a complete picture of the battlefield is simply amazing as well as unbelievably important to the overall mission.

I look forward to getting to know everyone and continue to develop the team. I believe in having fun, while upholding high standards and aggressively completing the mission. I maintain an open door policy to both the Soldiers I serve and their families. Stand proud of your Soldier and the great jobs they are doing to provide intelligence support to the Warhorse Brigade.

Look out; there is a new XO in town! I am 1LT Olzacki, the FOX Recon Platoon Leader. The change is not permanent; I am just helping out while 1LT Aptaker is on leave. The big news story for the month is the change of command that the company has undergone. We all said goodbye to CPT Carter and welcomed our new commander

CPT Prince. The transition has been smooth, except maybe for the supply section, they had the hardest job of all, accounting for all the company's equipment. I am sure SGT Thompson is happy the changeover is finally complete. The CGS section is up and running again, spending long nights in the CP, providing their input to help the fight. The IEW section has also been working hard. They are making sure the systems are ready to take on the heat of an Iraq-summer. We could not perform our mission without their expertise.

The time continues to fly-by here at FOB Kalsu and before you know it we will be back home. Until then, thank you for all the letters and packages, and please keep them coming. It is always nice to have something special waiting for you after a long day's work.

STALKER 6 -ALWAYS OUT FRONT!



The new commander



Stalker change of command



Alpha Company formation during the change of command



SSG Whetsel, SPC Yoo, SPC Marshall, SPC McKee and SPC Gomez down at Camp David



SSG Cottrell, SGT Hendrickson, SPC Darrington and SFC Lacny

Bravo Company Bulldogs

Greetings from Iraq. This month has been busy with promotions. We have promoted four more Soldiers from Private First Class to Specialist; they are SPC Deedon, SPC Dewaay and SPC Crowe and SPC Beachley. We have also had two more NCO's reenlist; SGT London and SGT Holland have chosen to extend their service to our nation.

This month I am going to spotlight our 25U's. These Soldiers make up the brigade's retransmission teams. The purpose of these teams is to extend the range of our tactical FM radio communications, which is the heart of communications for Soldiers when they are out on missions or combat patrols. This means of communications is usually how the first situation reports are submitted and calls for medical evacuation are made when an incident occurs. Recently, our teams have had the opportunity to support 2-8 Infantry on a few missions and have received high words of praise for their efforts.

Our Soldiers continue to do a great job over here and their hard work has ensured that the brigade has had reliable communications throughout the deployment. I am very proud of everything that they have done.

Bulldog 6 out

Helpful Numbers

Battalion Staff Duty: 287-7748

Brigade Staff Duty: 288-7509

Command Financial Specialist: 287-3418

Child and Youth services: 288-8029

Military ONESOURCE: 1-800-342-9647

Legal Assistance

Located at Bldg 10001, III Corps Headquarters (corner of Hood Rd and 76st Tank Bn Ave) 254-287-7901 / 254-287-3199.

Helpful Dates

Newcomers Brief: 27MAR06 at 1830 at 25th St. Chapel.

Volunteer/Purple Heart cerem: 28MAR at 1000 - OClub.

Daylight savings time: 02APR



SGT Holland and SGT Diaz double as construction workers



PFC Dewaay has a grand time getting promoted to SPC



SGT London reenlists